

Dear Henry,

6/26/86

There is, as I think I indicated with regard to Rush, a tendency to get too involved in criticism of books on the assassinations by their authors, convoluted but I think you see what I'm driving at.

The various newsletters have virtually no impact and all I've seen are a bit frail in the responsibility area. So on this basis alone they are rarely worth the time required for argument or defense against criticism. But there are reasons I'd like to believe you'll heed this advice.

If Rose prints your letter sophisticated and mature researchers of the future ~~will~~ may well develop questions of their own because of the nature of your defense of your publication of Easterling's story. Whether or not there were other such, and I mean the word although I've not argued with you about this and do not intend to start an argument now, confessions. Several at least to Garrison and a number to the super-market tabloids. Hicks confessed to being the communications man and he, at least, was placed at the scene of the crime by a picture. Then there was a painter with a French name ending in, well I'm not sure but I think something like "ille."

That the FBI has not seen fit to speak to any of those Easterling named is not in itself significant because that is the usual FBI practice, unless it has something in mind. And, having avoided any private devil's advocacy, you are not sensitive to what it can cite from his story as you published it to state to higher authority that any checking is not worth the cost. (Maybe the name ended in "ette.")

When you take time for what nature people may regard as petty it can raise questions about your own certainty. Remember, methinks the lady doth protest too much?

Didn't the variously named Cuban woman connected with Sturgis also confess to an involvement? More than once? Is her name, or one of them, Marita? And how about the other fake, Robert Morrow? Then there was a guy in Mass. who flew down to confess involvement with Shaw in the assassination. And Richard Rye.

Those who do not begin with your interests and perspectives will have questions about Easterling not going to anyone official earlier and not even trying to sell a story for about two decades. However you may accept it, do not believe for a minute that others will. Those who do not begin with your political beliefs, and I suggest that they engender political prejudices, will certainly have serious questions about the political aspects of the story you published.

So, what I'm suggesting that aside from making appearances, you ought take the position that the book is out and it has to stand on its own and not get involved in these emotional disputes that never solve anything and never lead to any kind of meaningful agreement. You will not change any minds and I don't think you are about to change your own mind. So why bother, and what good can it do?

Saul is a fake name and that is a fake story but the others named include real people, one of whom Lil and I spent a long evening with, Len Davidoff. Homer Kimsey also was real. His last lady friend was a friend of Lil's and mine.

When you get involved in things like this you (meaning all of us) lose objectivity and become insensitive for formulations that are weak and in themselves raise questions. Like the "manner" of Easterling's confession. And if anyone confessed to the JFK job, was not that "a successful conspiracy?" Anyone who invents a tale fits this. (The painter's first name is back in my mind now, Roland.) Because JFK was killed. (Nuts just about always confess to these major crimes. It happened in the King case, too.)

Remember, when we had differences long ago I told you I'd not take up the cudgels and you now know I didn't. I have no special desire to argue Easterling with you and I don't have time to do it in writing anyway because 5 hours daily are now required for what the doctors have to do me to. But if you are ever near here and want to, of course I'll discuss it. Best regards,

*Shirley - in copies to critics*